GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1452
ANSWERED ON:01.08.2000
RD AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION
SAHIB SINGH VERMA

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the provisions made under Section 243-G of the Constitution in regard to the powers, authority and responsibilities of the Panchayats in various States of the country;

(b) the progress made under these provisions during the last Eight years; and

(c) the details of the schemes for economic development and social justice as provided in the 11th Schedule of 73rd Amendment of the Constitution: and

(d) the steps taken for implementation of these schemes, State-wise?

Answer

MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT [SHRI SUNDAR LAL PATWA]

(a) Article 243-G of the Constitution provides that subject to the provisions of the Constitution, the Legislature of a State may, by law, endow the Panchayats with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self-government and such law may contain provisions for the devolution of powers and responsibilities upon Panchayats at the appropriate level, subject to such conditions as may be specified therein, with respect to -

(i) The preparation of plans for economic development and social justice;

(ii) the implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them including those in relation to the matters listed in the 11th Schedule.

(b) State Legislatures have been vested with powers to make laws regarding the devolution of powers upon Panchayats. Since the coming into force of these provisions in 1993, States/UTs have devolved powers and functions upon Panchayats in varying degrees. States like Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal have transferred a number of Departments to Panchayats. In several States/UTs, Gram Sabha is the final authority for selection of beneficiaries.Some State Governments have extended considerable financial powers to Gram Panchayats e.g. in Kerala and Punjab they can execute works without external sanction upto Rs.1 lakh, in Madhya Pradesh upto Rs.3 lakhs on Gram Sabha resolution and in West Bengal no ceiling has been prescribed. The Government of Kerala has allocated 40% of the plan funds as untied funds to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) enabling Panchayats to prepare development plans according to their needs.Many Central Schemes are being implemented by the PRIs. The States/UTshave been advised to devolve adequate powers to Panchayats to enable them to function as institutions of local self-government and have been urged to put in place systems of auditing to ensure transparency and accountability in the functioning of Panchayats.

(c) & (d) : The Eleventh Schedule to the Constitution of India lists 29 subjects on which Panchayats are to prepare plans for economic and social justice and to implement the same. The Panchayats prepare plans for execution of development works based on needs and availability of funds. These schemes/plans are not being monitored at the Central level.